To authorize the Director of the National Science Foundation to award grants to support research on the disruption of regular cognitive processes associated with COVID–19 infection, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
MARCH 21, 2022
Mr. GONZALEZ of Ohio (for himself, Mr. KINZINGER, Ms. WILD, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. MELJER, Mr. PETERS, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, and Mr. GIBBS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

A BILL
To authorize the Director of the National Science Foundation to award grants to support research on the disruption of regular cognitive processes associated with COVID–19 infection, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
This Act may be cited as the “Brycen Gray and Ben Price COVID–19 Cognitive Research Act”.

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS.
In this Act—
(1) the term “Director” means the Director of the National Science Foundation;

(2) the term “National Academies” means the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine; and

(3) the term “eligible entity” means an institution of higher education (as such term is defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)) or a consortium composed of non-profit organizations and institutions of higher education.

SEC. 3. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The COVID–19 pandemic has disrupted nearly every aspect of life across the globe. Furthermore, it has produced major disruptions of individual's physical and mental health, including with respect of children and adolescents.

(2) Historical epidemiological perspectives suggest an association between exposure to general respiratory viruses and subsequent disruption of regular cognitive processes.

(3) Early research suggests that one in three individuals diagnosed with a COVID–19 infection
experiences a disruption of regular cognitive processes within six months of such diagnosis.

(4) Research is urgently needed to better understand why disruption in regular cognitive processes occur in patients as a consequence of a COVID–19 infection and how long such disruptions can continue after recovery.

(5) The National Science Foundation has a deep history of supporting interdisciplinary, basic research that spans the social, behavioral, and fundamental biological sciences and paves the way for scientific advancements.

SEC. 4. NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION RESEARCH.

The Director shall award grants to eligible entities, including through the RAPID funding mechanism, on a competitive, merit-reviewed basis to support interdisciplinary research on the disruption of regular cognitive processes associated with both short-term and long-term COVID–19 infections, including with respect to children and adolescents. Such research may include the following:

(1) Foundational studies on the effects of cognition, emotion, and neural structure and function relating to any disruption of regular cognitive processes associated with COVID-19 infection.
(2) Analysis of findings on the disruption of regular cognitive processes associated with COVID–19 infection, including the development of predictive theoretical frameworks to guide future research.

(3) Development of physical and conceptual tools needed to evaluate cognition, emotion, and neural structure and function of the brain as a consequence of a COVID–19 infection, and the potential relevance of such infection to the disruption of regular cognitive processes.

(4) Studies on the relevance of psychological and psychosocial factors, including major disruptions of physical health, mental health, and economic stability associated with the COVID–19 pandemic, on the disruption of regular cognitive processes, including an identification and evaluation of such factors.

(5) Any other activities the Director determines will support interdisciplinary research and collaboration on the disruption of regular cognitive processes associated with COVID–19 infection, including with respect to children and adolescents.

SEC. 5. NATIONAL ACADEMIES STUDY ON THE DISRUPTION OF COGNITIVE PROCESSES ASSOCIATED WITH COVID–19 INFECTION.

(a) Study.—
(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 45 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director shall enter into an agreement with the National Academies to study and produce a report on the disruption of cognitive processes associated with COVID–19 infection. The study shall—

(A) review the research literature and identify research gaps regarding Federal programs and activities with roles in addressing both short-term and long-term consequences associated with COVID–19 infection;

(B) assess the necessity of establishing causal inference approaches into research on the impacts of COVID-19 infection on cognitive processes to determine reverse causation;

(C) evaluate and make recommendations regarding the coordination of research and data collection, including with respect to children and adolescents, to identify the disruption of regular cognitive processes associated with COVID–19 infection, including long-term COVID-19;

(D) evaluate impacts of COVID-19 infection on populations under-represented in cog-
nitive literature, such as poor, rural, and minority populations; and

(E) make recommendations regarding ways to coordinate engagement with researchers and stakeholders from universities, industry, public health organizations, State and local governments, elementary and secondary educational organizations, and non-profit organizations to ensure that research, information, and best practices relating to the disruption of regular cognitive processes associated with COVID–19 infection, including long-term COVID-19, are shared among such entities.

(2) COMPLETION.—The study required under paragraph (1) shall be completed by not later than the date that is 16 months after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) REPORTS.—

(1) BY THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES.—Upon completion of the study under subsection (a), the National Academies shall transmit to the Director and Congress a report on such study.

(2) BY THE DIRECTOR.—Not later than three months after receipt of the report under paragraph (1), the Director shall transmit to Congress a sum-
mary of the Director’s plans, if any, to implement
the recommendations of the National Academies
contained in such report.

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated to the Direc-
tor to carry out this Act $10,000,000 for fiscal year 2023,
to remain available through fiscal year 2025, of which
$1,000,000 is authorized to carry out the study and
produce the reports under section 5.